

Side Pocket Sailing

By Marilyn Zelke –Windau

Lake Michigan has a little side pocket.
It's a deep, narrow pocket,
a waterslide named the Bay
of Green Bay.

We set sail from Sister Bay
one August morning
aboard the Edith M. Becker,
a tall ship, hand built,
now leisuring it, having sailed
around the world with two families,
small children, one stove in the galley,
one head, two taking turns at the wheel,
sleeping catch as catch can,
buying fresh in port, when port there was.

Not crew, not captain, we sat as passengers,
looked far up the main sail's mast,
the pillar of a yellow pine.
The clumping, pumping of sail clasps rising
added a beat to the wind's steady voice.



Photo by Mark Adsit

The sail, catching the wind, careened us forward.
In harmony, the boom shifted slowly,
jerked, then resumed a sustained sweep,
balancing its ballet leaps with the breeze.

Far off on the horizon, grey scallops of clouds
formed horizontal folds of curtains.
The water wove a zigzag surface cloth
of monochromatic blues.

Not horsepower, not fish power,
the power of a sail's just right resistance
to wind and water,
breeze and wave,
brought us the calm of steady,
of movement controlled,
of "Yes, you can look about now,
before we come about, to return her to harbor."

Background original photo by Mark Adsit (2015)



Photo by Roger Crill (2010)



Photo by Holly Gertz (2013)